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A VICAR'S POEMS

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BY

GEORGE HILL BOTTOOME
VICAR OF GRACE CHAPEL 1895 TO 1913

WITH INTRODUCTORY PREFACE BY
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PREFACE

Those who were personally acquainted with Mr. Bottome will greatly appreciate and prize this little volume of his poems. To others it will help to reveal the singular charm of his character. He was a man of profoundly religious spirit, with a lyric gift of expression, and both these qualities are reflected in his poems. From his early college days down almost to the close of his life it was his habit from time to time to clothe his thoughts in verse. This he did not for publication but simply because it was for him such a natural thing to do. Some of his poems have already found their way into print; but even his intimate friends did not know—for he was a rarely modest and self-effacing man—how many more he had written of equal beauty and charm; and to them this present collection will come, not altogether as a surprise, but as the still further revelation of one whose personality they had learned to love and admire; and they as well as others will be grateful for this little sheaf of sonnets which a loving heart has gathered and given to the public as a tribute to his memory.

DAVID H. GREER.

January, 1915.

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Not dead but living—so ascends our praise,
No minor strain may creep into our song.
Elsewhere than here, along God's chosen ways,
Thy feet run swift to do His loving will.
Help thou our strivings towards that Holy Hill
Henceforth thy Home, O tender soul and strong.

Sonnets

THE ITALIAN BOOTBLACK.

What right divine gives me the kingly place,
O'er him, my youthful subject, bending low ?
Strive as I may, not mine his thoughts to know,
Only to watch, with what unconscious grace
(Each flashing gesture tell-tale of his race)
His eager hands fly swiftly to and fro.
Soft syllabled his alien accents flow ;
He lifts his eyes ; at last I see his face.

No menial soul bows in that gaze to me ;
Out of such depths, the pallid Florentine
Saw down to Hell, looked up to Paradise ;
Lorenzo's orbs are his that darkly shine ;
A nation's history is in these eyes,
Thy pathos and thy promise, Italy !

Permission of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

THE HOUR AND THE DAY

The hour of death ; the Day of judgment ; so
The ancient words fall on the careless ear.
Yet what a world of difference is here !
For death strikes once, and sharp ; its hour we
know ;
But who may comprehend the ebb and flow
Of that Great Day, when all man's works appear
Weighed in God's balances for joy or fear—
What mortal mind its measurements may show ?

Because we may not scan infinity,
Nor scale divine decrees with mete and rod,
Our hearts beat high ; our trembling spirits pray
That mercy may with judgment mix, and we,
In the long progress of that solemn Day,
Rise to the stature of the sons of God.

PETER'S SHADOW

Not ours to idly wonder as we hear
That ancient story of the earliest day ;
Christ's chosen one pursues his healing way
Amid the throng of earthly woe and fear.
For who remembers not, as they appear,
The years of his own life in long array,
Some soul like his with power God-given to stay
And strengthen with his shadow, drawing near.

Mixed with the burden of the general song
That greets thee now, be this my grateful strain—
That in the shadow of thy faithful years
The wandering one has found his way again ;
How many saddened ones have dried their tears
How many weak ones, through thy strength been
strong.

BEFORE EASTER

Lord! how Thy church shall greet Thee when
the cry

“The Lord is risen” smites the waiting air!
How thick the answering echoes everywhere,
“Indeed He rises!” Yet, for all that, I
Fear lest the Day shall pass its hours by,
And all unanswered be my soul’s deep prayer,
“Wherever else Thou risest, Lord, rise there,
Within my soul that seeks Thee earnestly.”

My days are full like Martha’s busy days,
Yet Mary’s better part is what I seek.
O, in the multitudinous voice of praise
At Easter finding access to Thine ear,
My yearning tremulous accents wilt Thou hear?
For me, as if alone, O do Thou speak.

THE MOUNT OF VISION

Friend! you and I the mountain-top have won—
Behind us now the long cross-burdened way.
All ours the glow of this triumphant Day,
And in our hearts, the toilsome journey done,
Thanksgiving to God's ever risen Son
Transfigured on the Mount while we delay.
What joy to linger with Him here alway
While others strive the race that we have run.

Yet well we know for all this vision sweet
Cross-burdened still, our life before us lies.
Gird up the loin! Press firm the staff again!
Forward the call to our obedient feet.
Downward we go, to where they meet our eyes,
The visionless hour, the trial, and the pain.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE SACRAMENT OF UNITY

He blessed the bread ; the sacred wine He blessed,
The while around Him sat His chosen band,
The little flock, not theirs to understand
What depths of love those mysteries expressed !
They saw in Him of all life's gifts, the best !
To Him they were the first fruits God had planned
(Whose harvest yet shall overspread the land)
To fill man's empty life and give it rest.

Here ends the way which patient souls have trod,
For here, the talisman of unity
Springs from the answer to a common need.
Here on God's love humanity may feed.
And feel in every vein stir rich and free
The blood-bond of one brotherhood in God.

MARTIN LUTHER

Beside the Eastern gate of Paradise,
Where-through the golden car of morning sped,
Two seraphs stood and watched with calm mild
eyes

The far gleam of the world, purple and red,
Deep down in the still ether, and one said,
When comes the day that shall light those in
gloom?

Lo! all the life and love and hope are dead
As once He lay, who brought them, in the tomb!

Nay, said the second, Life can never die,
Eternal as the Heart of God is Truth.
And as he spake a spirit floated by.
And down, far down, swift as a dream of youth,
Low voices sang, as strains that soft harps stir,
“It is the soul of the Deliverer!”

THE WOODS IN APRIL

Friend ! let us seek the silent woods and be
Imprisoned 'neath their leafy bars, and lie
Watching the mellow beauty of the sky
Through its green frame ; the clouds that silently
Float far above upon the azure sea,
The mossy crevices where brooklets go
A-tinkling down in mimic overflow,
Where like an exhalation, drowsily,

Rise the soft scents of myrrh and buds of spring
That mingle in the dreamy air, there may
We find some quiet spot far from the way,
By man unfrequented, where we may fling
All thoughts that fret, aside, and wander there
Free as the birds that sing in that calm air.

How strangely still ! No voice but ours shall
break
The utter silence of these April groves,
Unless, mayhap, old Pan shall pipe his loves
Again to us—again the wide woods make

A merry holiday, and Dryads take
Gay wreaths of flowers to bind the master's
hands,
(A willing prisoner, bound with such sweet
strands.)
And with his charmèd reed the echoes wake!

Rest here, dear friend, and for a while forget
What lingereth beyond the forest gates :
The discord of the life without us, waits—
Let us not seek it, let us tarry yet
In these fresh walks and avenues of trees,
Lulled by the music of an April breeze.

PARTING

To watch the sunlight gently steal away,
Over the western hills and softly sink,
'Mid sighing winds, beyond the sunset's brink,
Yet leaving still some slowly fading ray,
Doth saddening seem—as if at close of day
Each beam in sorrow stops a while to drink
A long, last draught of sweetness—stops to
 think,
Reluctant still to pass along the way.

So as I said "Farewell," the look you cast
In longing token of regret said "Stay,"
So tender, yet so full of pain and tears.
'Tis all that I remember—years have past--
Each day hope fades—yet still I look away,
Restful, thine eyes I see, across the years!

AT SEA

How often have we looked out on the sea
And wondered dreamily what broad lands lay
Beyond the narrow rim that seems to be
Ever between the near and far away.
'Twill not be long before we joyfully
Shall look beyond the golden line that binds
Our sight to nought but wide waves rolling free,
Tossed to the music of the ocean winds.

It is to me so sweet a thought to know
That some time, though the sea is wide and
deep,
We all, however far our ships may go,
Through what dread storms of fate and chance,
may keep
Watch for the land that lies beyond the sea,
The Port that waiteth for thy ship and thee.

HERESY

AN UNRHYMED SONNET

This is the truth, he cried, and sharply drew
A line between him and his erstwhile friend.
So was the battle set in keen array.
To either standard flocked the impetuous hosts,
Forgetful of the common blood that flowed
In veins that claimed a heavenly parentage,
While all about a crowd unshepherded
Beheld the strife and passed with scornful eyes.

But one there was who saw the conflict grow,
And yearned to gather all within his fold.
Yet had He naught to say but one soft word:
“It is my sheep who hear my Voice. They know
Their Master’s face, and follow!” Only this
Can knit the Household in the bond of Peace.

TO W. M. B.

Old Boy, an ocean rolls between us two,
Who first shall cross it? Shall the New Year
see

Thee once again beneath the brighter blue
Of thine own skies, or shall I traveller be
And cross the dark blue wastes that lead to thee—
And breathe old England's air again, and find
An English welcome waiting, full and free?
In either case Fate could not be more kind.

And yet perchance this year and many more
Shall fade ere we shall see each other's eyes.
Its close may find us lingering on the shore
And gazing seaward as its last hour dies.
Ah well! Thank God no deeper oceans roll
Between our loves, dividing soul from soul.

EXPECTATION

As one who weary of the day's despite
Longs for the deep dark hours of shadowy
sleep ;
Impatient lingers in the dying light,
Listening vaguely to the winds that keep
Perpetual moan, as waves that overleap
The rocky shores that bind the great sea in,
Or like the notes of some old song that creep
Into the throbbing silence faint and thin,

So wait I for that hour which sundereth
The life without me from that inner life,
Patient I wait, as for the shadowy rest
Of some great love, where to forget the strife
And pain that linger here were best,
Whether it cometh now or after death.

A QUERY

“Why is Light given him whose way is hid?”
What lands lie just beyond the sunset glow?
Why must we toil the dark and gloom amid
And only trust what we may never know?
Some time we fancy that we hear the flow
Of the wide sea, and list if we may hear
The summons, lingering while the swift days
go,
The voice we’ve waited for so many a year.

Ah, well! we’ve had our dreams, though into day
The golden lands with night’s dark shadows flee.
Thank God that we may dream! and let us be
Guides to the many who have lost their way,
Into whose troubled sleep no sweet dreams come,
All homeless here who never dream of home.

IN MEMORY OF MARY WILTSE

Mother to many children, not thine own,
Over forever thy fond labours here!
Fields thy unresting, loving hands have sown,
Others must reap in harvests glad or sere;
Lover of lives, thy pure soul could hold dear
Lives with dank weeds of sinning overgrown;
How shall these miss thee in their hours of
fear,
She, had God spared her, she at least had known.

Yet do we dream that ever thy pure eyes
Watch o'er thy loved ones; that thy prayers are
said
Still for the falling souls thou badest rise!
Still dost thou kneel beside the lone child's bed!
Never may one say: Lo! our friend is dead,
Thou in God's nursery of Paradise.

THE SLEEP OF DAY

Oh, silent hour of midnight ! how thy pall
Lies over rocky height and lowly grove—
Lo ! where the day has been, now seem to move
Naught but the shadows and the rippling fall
Of yonder meadow brook, where creeps the wall,
Ancient and ruinous, across the meads—
While mournfully the willow through its weeds
Weeps for the silence hanging over all.

A few short hours ago, and all was light,
The water rippled merrily, and trilled
The birds beneath the willows' loving shade.
Perchance the day gave place to dreamful night
Because it needed rest, and so it willed
That it should sleep a while beneath the glade.

UTTERANCE

The wizard hands rise from the smitten keys,
The last tone dies away. With one acclaim
The multitude pours forth a master's name.
He stands unsatisfied. His spirit sees
Those unrevealed, unuttered mysteries,
Locked in his breast, until, with heart of flame,
A perfect instrument shall crown his fame
With harmonies more wonderful than these.

He waits the day when deep to deep shall be,
Artist and instrument, a mutual fire.
In absolute response, one life, one soul.
As once He lived, Whose innermost desire
Gave back to Heaven, like tidal oceans' roll,
The fulness of the Godhead bodily.

TO THE RECTOR (W. R. H.)

We are thy staff, yet 'tis on thee we lean.
Gathered to-night we greet thy day and thee,
Bound each to each in one true fealty,
Seeking such visions as thine eyes have seen.
For what more helpful path hath ever been,
Tracking life's upward slope, than thus to be
Proud of a leadership, whose light shines free
Amid earth's shadows and its ways between?

One work is ours; to one high call we yield,
First heard, when to that upper room they came,
And left it, armed with breastplate, sword and
shield,
Those first disciples, owning one high Name,
To bear His Cross and to His bidding sealed,
Thrilled with the touch of love's immortal flame.

THE QUEST

Stay thy bruised feet beyond the world and rest;
Its gates swing shut, and only now and then
The drowsy murmur of the sons of men
Creeps slowly to us. Yonder is our quest,—
The open fields. Sweet spaces of the West,
Deep dreams of unknown seas whose waters meet
The happy fields, soft trodden by sweet feet,
Sweet feet that once the world's dark pathways
pressed.

These too passed on and heard the wide gates
swing
Behind them, noiselessly and strong and deep
The large air on their faces. Long ago
They passed as dreamers in a dreamful sleep.
Thither our feet must lead our wandering—
Whither? We know not. Onward! This we
know!

HOPE

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"
—SHELLEY.

The winds are signalling across the snow,
The flakes in whirling eddies far are blown
Aslant white plains and rocky ridges lone,
Around cold meads that in the summer know
The fragrance of the clover, and the flow
Of gentle rivulets, and faint, new mown,
The incense of the hay (with summer flown)
High piled by swains in many a rustic row.

How saddening all would seem! how cold and
chill!

How ghastly white the pallor of the fields!
Did we not know that what we see has been!
That what has been must be—that spring must
still
The winter follow, that the autumn yields
Of harvest happiness will yet be seen.

AFTER-GLOW

I

This is the end of day, yet what an end !
Look where we will God's glory fills the sky.
East, west, north, south the flaming angels fly,
From hill to hill their messages they send ;
From peak to peak their glowing way they wend.
What art of man may to the entrancèd eye
Fix to his joy, for all eternity,
A scene where earth and heaven a moment blend !

Yet once before within the circling day
God visited the earth and blessed it so :
When at the dawn the watchman's weary eyes
Gleamed with the promise of the glistening skies,
And thrilled to find the darkness melt away,
Behold, he cried, it is the morning glow !

II

From light to light, from morn to eventide—
So rounds the perfect day from sun to sun.

Yet hath each glow one meaning and but one,
Promise, not retrospect! The shadows glide
From out the darkling hills; and at my side
The swift hours rush to nightfall one by one.
Yet well I know their journeys are not run
Till they in morning light are glorified.

At evening and at morning, one the song,
Across the enraptured heavens, the angels sing
Wrapping the world in light of heaven born.
I lift my heart, with praises answering
The sursum corda of the sacred throng;—
From light to light; from eventide to morn.

PHILAMMON

He bids me go! Behind, the deserts sleep
Silent, alone beneath a sullen sun.

My boyhood years have hastened one by one
Unto their death, and now as they who weep
The loss of some sweet friend, and ever keep
Watch where he lies whose earthly life is done,
So I, these hours whose sands, alas! are run,
Those waving fields whose grain I did not reap!

Till yesterday I knew no world, save these
Wide solemn vasts, the red sky overhead,
The long, long days, and when their heat had fled,
The holy contact with the mysteries
Of Him my master serves—and now I seem
Only to waken from a weary dream.

For there are lands beyond this broad demesne—
And rolling hills, the ceaseless ebb and flow
Of mighty rivers, and the glittering show
And pageantry of cities—it has been

A weary watch with me. Well, I have seen
The last sun light these hot sands with its glow.
For ere the morrow's dawn I seek the low
Cool meadow-lands and fields of gold and green.

And oh! I then shall look upon the sea
And hear its roll and roar upon the sands,
And feel its kiss upon my face—but he
That bids me go, my guide, why does he stay?
Ah, can it be that I will yet, some day,
From out that world, sigh for these desert lands?

Poems of the Higher Life

ALL THE WORLD IS SOFTLY SLEEPING

ALL the world is softly sleeping,
Calm the night and blest,
Only Shepherds watch are keeping
O'er their flocks at rest.
Happy Shepherds, you have chosen
Of all ministries the best.

On your eyes the light of Heaven
Gleams this Holy night,
On your ears the angel voices
Sound their message bright.
On to Bethlehem, Shepherds, hasten,
See, adore the wond'rous sight.

Leave your flock to God's safe guiding;
One is born to-day,
Shepherd of all flocks abiding
In His heavenly way.
Where the light shall guide you, follow,
Let no fear your steps delay.

So they found the lowly manger
In humility,
There, before their Lord and Master,
Bent the reverent knee,
While the heavens with joy were ringing,
“In the highest glory be!”

We may join that angel chorus,
Nevermore to die.
While the Christmas light falls o'er us ;
Ours its melody.
Singing Holy, Holy, Holy
Jesus, Saviour, Lord most high.

THEN AND NOW

Who see the golden light on high?
Who hear the startled shepherds' cry?
They who have shepherds' hearts, and keep
Watch in the world's night, dark and deep,
Over God's wandering restless sheep.
They see the golden light on high,
They hear the startled shepherds' cry.

Who find in the dark the holy star
Lead them where Mother and Baby are?
They who the wise men's trust keep clear,
Shining within, though without be drear;
Knowing that somewhere God is near.
They find in the dark the holy star
Lead them where Mother and Baby are.

Where is He born at this late day
Who once, God's Son, in a manger lay?
Ever in hearts kept pure and sweet,
Lives that follow His blessed feet,

Souls for the place of His birth made meet ;
There is He born at this late day,
Who once, God's Son, in a manger lay.

What may we bring with prophet and seer,
Now that the holy time is here ?
Faith that can see the halo light,
Hope assured of a world made right,
Love that flames in the wintry night ;—
These may we bring with prophet and seer,
Now that the holy time is here.

MY CHRISTMAS TREE

On Christmas Eve I found my Tree,
My little tree of odorous pine.
No costly gifts of worldly show
Were there to make its boughs aglow—
'Twas God who made my tree to shine
With His own gifts for all to see.

For there He set the star of Love
Upon the topmost twig to stand.
And underneath His Hope shone bright,
As gleamed the skies that Christmas night,
When suddenly o'er all the land
Sang holy ones from heaven above.

And midway like a matchless gem
The gift of Faith hung clear and sweet.
My heart leaped up to meet its ray,
As though I too must take my way
And follow where the shepherds' feet
Would find the path to Bethlehem.

I asked not other gifts than these;
For as I gazed I could not doubt
That He, Who made the Feast, had given
These living gifts to me from heaven.
My thanks like bubbling springs broke out:
Bless God for all such Christmas Trees.

CHRISTMAS ALONE

Lord! o'er Thy world with holy mirth,
The Christmas notes are blown;
How can I share the joy of earth,
Or sing my songs alone?

Lord! with that other heavenly light
His eyes Thy vision see;
The life that made my life so bright,
Henceforth belongs to Thee.

Lord! on my eyes lay Thou Thy hand,
Make his new vision mine;
So shall we still walk hand in hand,
He, I, forever Thine.

REUNION

As gather we about our Christmas tree,
So find we there God's costly gifts and dear,
And in their gleam Heaven's portals draw more
 near,
One family in earth and heaven are we.
What though we strive an earthly face to see
And strive in vain; still luminous and clear
The lights of Bethlehem behold appear,
"The day is breaking and the shadows flee."

THE CHRISTMAS NIGHT WATCH

At dead of night the glory came,
At dead of night the Christmas flame ;—
The wondering shepherds leaped to hear
The angel voices thrilling clear.
Thenceforth each midnight brought to them
The memories of Bethlehem !

Lord ! deep the shadows round me lie,
No star shines through my wintry sky.
Break through Thy heavens, and let the strain
The angels sang resound again ;
Fill all my lonely soul with light,
Be born again at dead of night.

LENT

At early dawn my soul cried out,
With pain and travail spent,
How fruitless is my dear desire:
I cannot keep my Lent.

“O foolish!” so I dreamed I heard
A voice speak clear and free,
“Give o'er the thought of keeping Lent,
Let Lent, Christ's Lent, keep thee.”

AN EASTER CAROL

Sing we now our songs of gladness
To our risen King.

To His feast of life eternal
Grateful hearts we bring.

He who walked the ways of anguish,
He who all earth's sorrows bore,
Now at God's right hand is seated
King forever more.

King of Love, Thy children hail Thee
On this royal day ;
Scattering their flowers and blossoms
All along Thy way.

Thou who once endured man's crowning,
Cruel thorns Thy pure brow pressed,
Now art crowned with life and glory,
King forever blest.

Ended now Thine earthly conflict,
All its battles done,
Darkness flees before Thy rising
Thou unsetting Sun !

Death and sin once vainly struggled
Over Thee the power to win ;
But the grave could not enchain Thee,
King o'er death and sin.

King Thou art and crowned immortal,
Heaven Thy home above !
Still for souls that need Thy succour
Stirs Thy heart with love.
Help us, Lord, our foes to conquer,
Hear the prayer Thy children bring,
Let our lives victorious hail Thee,
Jesus, Lord and King.

WHITSUNDAY

How is it that our tongue they know,
These stranger sons that come from far,
How read the sign that makes us one?
The miracle this day has done?
From many lands are we, and lo,
All gathered here as brethren are.

What tongue is this that all may use?
What power here richly spread abroad?
No Elamite or Parthian name
We give to this swift touch of flame
Able for evermore to fuse
Our differing notes in one accord.

It is God's love that thrills us here,
And breaks our alien barrier through,
And one in Him, we turn to see
The oneness of humanity.
And on each erstwhile deafened ear
God's message falls as early dew.

So once again as on that Day,
We come to seek thy gift divine,
We too would see all souls in Thee,
For we too claim thy sons to be.
Purge out the dross; drive fear away,
And let the words we speak be Thine.

A MORNING SONG

Shepherd dear, Shepherd sweet,
Thee Thy loving children greet.
Shepherd sweet, Shepherd strong,
Listen to Thy children's song.
Now another day is dawning,
In the East the gladsome morning
Lights the world, the skies adorning
With its colours blithe and gay.
Darkness flies
As we rise.
In our work, in our play,
Shepherd be with us to-day!

When the night shadows deep
Summon us again to sleep ;
When the stars, one by one
Tell us that our day is done.
Shepherd, in the darkness tending
Helpless lambs, from ill defending,
O'er Thy sleeping children bending,

Shield Thou them from harm and fear—
Be our rest
Pure and blest!
Day and night be Thou near,
Shepherd ever kind and dear.

TO W. A.

Within His arms the children lay,
Those little ones of long ago.
He held them closely to His breast ;
Upon their heads His hands He pressed.
“Keep not my little ones away
From me, their Friend, who loves them so !”

Thou faithful Friend, most tried and dear,
O tenderest Heart, look down and see
Another lamb of Thine own fold—
Be Thine the arms that closely hold
His life to Thine forever near.
Thy gift to us, we give to Thee.

ALL SAINTS

Soldiers of Christ, whose work is done,
Warriors for right, whose crowns are won,
This is your day ; our praises ring,
The Saints of God remembering.

Peace is your portion ; endless rest,
And fellowship forever blest
With Him your King, Whose marks ye bear,
Whose cross ye bore ; Whose crown ye share.

For us no peace, but endless fight
Against the armies of the night ;
Yet only through such strife and pain
May we that fellowship attain.

Sometimes our struggles fruitless seem,
And victory but a doubtful dream ;
Lay down your arms, our weak hearts cry,
Give over, fight no more, or die.

In that dark moment of our dread,
When faith is cold, and hope seems dead,
Is it a fancy that we hear
A voice speak to the spirit's ear:

Open their eyes that they behold
The banners of Thy Saints unfold,
Where, rank by rank, in myriads rise
The matchless armies of the skies.

These, too, the earthly fields have pressed,
Once they by terror were possessed,
These even now shall take their stand,
Strengthening their brethren hand in hand.

Ah, yes! Our battles will ye fight,
In all our darkness gleams your light;
Shine down on us, and point the way
That leads from shadows into day.

Because you conquered, so shall we
Win yet with you our victory.
Ye Saints of God, your work not done
Till we, like you, our crowns have won!

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

"Thou, O God, art the thing that I long for."

God, Thou dost give and Thou dost take;
Thy equal love bestows, denies;
Thy will it is when life is sweet,
And plain the path before our eyes.
Thy will no less, when weary feet
The journey's end find hard to make.

How easily the praises come
When prayers are answered as we would;
But, oh, how faltering the strain,
That claims Thee Father, hails Thee good,
When our heart's wish returns again
Void, and Thy loving lips are dumb.

Dumb seem Thy lips to our despair;
Despair that flows from human loss.
But He Who drank earth's bitterness
Rebukes us from His patient cross.
What matters earthly more or less,
If Thou, O Father, still art there?

Be Thou Thyself our constant plea,
So satisfy the human cry.
For all Thy wisdom has denied
Thou never wilt Thyself deny.
Rich, though we lack all else beside,
Father, we cry, we lack not Thee.

AT A BAPTISM

Not like those churlish ones of old
Who would have kept them from Thy fold,
We, Thy disciples, run to place
Our little ones in Thy embrace.
Open Thine arms, O Shepherd dear,
A little waiting lamb is here !

Too well we know the thorny road
They tread, who stray from Thine abode ;
That sweet abode where Thou dost keep,
In safety, Thine obedient sheep.
Open the gate, O Shepherd dear,
A little waiting lamb is here !

Nothing Thy lamb knows yet but this,
A father's arm, a mother's kiss ;
No claim upon Thee, save that Thou
Wast Love incarnate once, and now.
Open Thy heart, O Shepherd dear,
A little waiting lamb is here !

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Lord, as on this day Thou didst dawn
With sudden light and strong,
On Thine Apostle journeying
The Syrian wastes along.
Along the Syrian wastes he rode,
The red sun overhead,
The desert like an unknown sea,
And silent as the dead.

He saw not sandy plain nor sky,
Nor felt the sun's fierce ray ;
Alone from all, he ever kept
His solitary way,
Waiting, till from the horizon's brim,
Sudden and cool and sweet,
Damascus, like a gift of God,
His burning eyes might greet.

Within his heart one purpose held,
Death to a curséd race ;
And ever as he mused, more deep
The gloom fell on his face.

When sudden as a cloud that breaks
The morning sun before,
A voice spake, that in his great heart,
Kept echoing evermore.

Oh days long past! Oh travelling souls!
Oh! deserts hot and still!
Sounds there no voice, in these dim days,
Ill-guided lives to fill
With high and noble purposes?
Damascus-ward we fare!
Speaks that Voice but to him that breathed
That distant Syrian air?

Smite us with that conviction, Lord,
That burned his breast within;
That ever eager love of Thee,
And fiercer hate of sin.
Breathe life in aspirations young,
Strike death to deadening fears,
Shine through the gloom that rises from
The irrevocable years!

Teach us to trust, though faith be dim,
And prayers but slowly come,
Uncovenanted mercies, Lord,
To guide the wanderer home;

Since once Thine own Apostle o'er
The Syrian desert trod,
Nor dreamed that God so near him was,
Though he were far from God!

Poems of College Years

A VISION OF REST

One day I had a vision sweet of Rest.
Her face? Ah me! So beautiful and kind,
So full of Love divine and tenderest pity,
As if Almighty Art had reached its height
In giving life to that blest countenance—
In wonder reverential, and in love,
“O Rest,” I said, “the Prototype of Death,
O, take me to thyself! and grant me Peace—”
“Not so,” the vision said in accents mild,
“Oh, Youth—know’st not that only Rest is given
To those whose work on earth is fully done?
Come near and mark the furrows in my face.
Such meeds of toil and labour must thou bear,
Ere thou at last canst gain the boon of Peace
When life is gone and man begins to live.”
And as she spoke, I closer drew and gazed,
And on that face I marked the legacy
Of Care—yet marred it not but rather gave
To it a higher and more human strength,
And made it, were it possible, more grand—
And lo! Upon a sudden that blest face

Was flooded with a radiance divine—
And smiling, as she said, “Work till the end!
Be faithful! I will come to thee at last.”
She vanished from my yearning, longing gaze—
So passed away the Vision sweet of Rest.

A RECOLLECTION OF FLORENCE

“Mother of sorrows! Our Lady of Pity,
Oh, in the hearts of thy servants shine bright.”
Slow rose the chant. O'er the slumbering city
Hung the light clouds of an Italy's night.

On past white portals that shone through the
darkness,
On past the tombs of those dead long ago;
Far to the altar, on whose sacred brightness
Fell the dim rush-light's uncertain glow,

Passed the procession; and still rose the chant,
Echoing ever as though sad to cease;
“We pray to thee, Mother, this boon to us grant,
Oh, to the hearts of thy servants give peace.”

Slow they passed back—by bright tapers light-
ened,
And as they passed, I too turned to go;
Mind and thought lifted, heart and soul bright-
ened
By that sad prayer to our Lady of woe.

For in my heart as I knelt there and prayed
 On Santa Croce's bare stones, on that night
A ray of her brightness indeed had there strayed,
 Into my heart "Her spirit shone bright."

Into the dungeon of self and wrong feeling,
 Sadly in which my best thoughts were confined,
Came there a Love and a Peace as soft stealing
 As odors of roses on summer's faint wind.

SUNSET LAKE

The lovely lake of sunset, on whose breast
The last love-tokens of the day do rest,
And trembling there in softest silence lie,
Content in dying if but there to die.

Ah! Lovely lake! how often have I gazed
Upon thy brightness. Pleasant thoughts are
raised

As now I see thee—thoughts that strangely take
Fantastic shapes and curious, and that make
Sweet chords of music on fond memory's lyre
That I could list for aye and never tire,
The song of long ago that nevermore
Shall sound re-echoing on the sun-kissed shore,
The song that once she sang. Oh, lake so bright,
How often when the portals of the night
Yet stood in silence barred across the sky;
When softly unreal beauties from on high
Fell on the landscape stretching far away,
Unto the limit of the realms of day,
She like some angel in her beauty rare,
Reflecting in her eyes the sunset fair,

Would sweetly sing as swift our boat moved on,
The song that, like the singer, now is gone.
Hushed are its echoes, silent now the strain,
The sun has set and slowly drips the rain.
The angry storm-king stands athwart the sky,
And pattering rain-drops on thy bosom lie,
And mingle with thy waters—as these tears
Do mingle with the thoughts of other years.
In sadness from thee, slow my way I make,
And say farewell for aye, fair Sunset Lake.

LILIES

Soft the summer breezes blow
O'er the flower-laden meads,
Where the willowy marsh-born reeds
Bend down to the gentle flow
Of the brooklet, winding down
Through the fields, beyond the town.

In the first flush of the dawn,
From their slumbers, lilies white,
Lift themselves, and in the sight
Of purest nature, as the morn
Smiles upon them, seem to be
The essence true of purity.

For across the meadows dark,
In the last still hours of night,
Radiant in celestial light,
Angels pass, and leave their mark
Upon the fields, and softly kiss
The lilies into loveliness.

So we know when comes the morn,
Dark though be the night and long,
If we listen, faint the song
The angels sing soft in the dawn,
Shall our sorrowed hearts surcease
With its melody of peace.

THE DESERTED CASTLE

High on the mountain's brow it stands
And looks o'er many a waste of lea,
Where far beyond the outstretched lands
Is seen the shining of the sea ;
A narrow circling band of white
That glistens in the long daylight.

From far below faintly ascend
And float about the lonely towers,
Field odours sweet that gently blend
With perfume of the garden flowers
That blossom 'neath the castle wall
Or nestle 'neath its bulwarks tall.

The rusted gate wide open swings
Responsive to the wanderer's hand,
And loud, aye loud its creaking rings,
And silent warders but demand
The cause whereof he enters here—
The home of death, the haunts of fear.

The dead leaves crackle as his tread
Resounds through court and palace yard,
And stare grim forms, as of the dead,
With stony faces, stern and hard,
Who guard the entrance to the hall
O'er which deep gloom lies like a pall.

From out the open banquet room,
As suddenly he opes the door,
Glide past the phantoms of the gloom
That haunt the castle old and hoar.
And slow the breezes through it sweep
And shudder at the darkness deep.

Through many a crevice in the wall,
Through rifts that grow as years roll on,
The green shoots of the ivy fall,
And o'er the banquet walls have grown
And cover with their leafy screen
Old armour and its golden sheen.

And from the summit of the tower
At dead of night strange creatures fly,
And mock the stillness of the hour
With many a loud and mournful cry,

And swoop down from the heights moss-grown
Through the long halls so stark and lone.

One day in wandering I espied
A tender spray of flowerets blue
Close by the wall, as though to hide
Their sweet rare faces that I knew.
I stood and gazed long at the spot
Where grew the bloom—"Forget-me-not."

I looked about, deep silence all,
The castle stood against the sky;
I walked a pace, mine own foot-fall
Was all I heard. I drew a sigh
And plucked the flower from off the plot
And murmured, "*All* is now forgot."

AN EVEN-SONG

As swiftly sped our boat along,
Past woods and islands green and fair,
The tall limp reeds and flowers among
That nodded to the soft spring air.

And on past hamlets hushed and drear,
By oaks that stood for ages long,
The echoes trembled far and near,
The echoes of our even-song.

Fresh and fair
The evening air
Blows softly o'er the lea,
Lightly sail
With fav'ring gale
The ships away at sea.

The tired day
As child from play
Seeks rest at even-tide,

And worrying care
And day's despair
Themselves rest at our side.

Night's curtain falls,
And sleep soft calls
Each one from care to cease,
As when at last
Our sorrows past,
God calls to rest and peace.

Slow rowed we back and no sound heard,
Save where the oar the water moved,
Or now and then some sweet-voiced bird
Sang his "good-night" to her he loved.

And soon upon us night came down,
And toilsome day with saddening eve
Quick passed away—forever gone
To lands where other days do live.

SONG

What is the love my heart hath given
Thee whose life is as breath to me?
Breath and sunshine, flower and feeling,
Wind of the East on a sluggish sea,
Over the wild waste waters stealing,
Thrilling and filling my heart with thee.

What is the love thy heart has given
Me whose soul is thine alway?
The faint winds quicken, the even lights glisten,
The birds' songs melt on the night away,
And still I linger and still I listen
For the low sweet words thy lips shall say.

What is the love our hearts have given
Each to the other loved and leal?
A joy no night may darken ever,
A word no sweet dead lips can seal,
Within the heart at rest forever
From the sorrows that beating hearts must
feel.

TO W. M. B.

How gratefully to those the day has tired,
To brows that ache, to troubled hearts at night,
Blows soft the wind from summer seas, when
 fired
With sunset hues, the east glows on the sight!
How cool the breeze after the noontide heat!
Had they not toiled, would it have seemed as
 sweet?

So comes thy letter like a balm to me.
Its words like summer winds my spirit kiss
Into forgetfulness of all save thee;
And yet—O, dear one—could I cherish this
So much—thy sympathy? but for the pain
It soothed? Oh, for such cure, come pain again!

REST

Into the forest depths I passed,
Beyond where human foot had pressed
The leaves that scorned a peaceful rest
Upon the bosom of the ground,
But round and round
In whirling eddies, swift and fast,
Blew here, blew there, with every breeze
That whispered music through the trees.

And there I found a silent lake,
So still and calm and pure, it seemed
Its waters smiled, as though they dreamed
That some sweet hope had proven true.
Ah me! how few
May dream and dream and never wake!
May live within the realm of sleep,
Nor wake to live, nor live to weep!

So crept I back full silently
And left the waters softly sleeping,
Safe in the silent forest's keeping.

Back to the dust of toil and day
I took my way.
It seemed as out I passed that I
Had seen death sleeping there, unmoved!
Nay, looked upon his face and loved!

LONGING

The train goes thundering on its iron way,
Yet I its passenger am spirit free.
I close my eyes and once again I hear
The soft wash of the waves, so crystal clear,
Upon the little sand beach tirelessly ;
Where all day long the happy children play.

I see the sunset's purple and its gold,
The dark hills stand to greet my spirit sight,
The lingering boats make harbour one by one,
The seaman takes in sail, his day is done.
Not earth-born is the peace that with the night
Enwraps our island as a sheep its fold.

TWO PICTURES

I

Through the grand cathedral slowly to the sacred
altar far,

Where the holy taper shining glimmered like a
distant star,

Where the censers swung and slowly wafted on
the scented air

Perfumes like those of the roses, blooming in the
summer fair,

Passed a group of maidens happy, strewing flow-
ers in the way,

Over which there walked a bride, of all, the hap-
piest on that day.

By a pillar near the altar, where the aged priest
did stand,

Curious watching, stood two travellers, strangers
from a distant land.

As intent they gazed about them, sweet a bridal
song was sung
By a white-robed choir of virgins, as the flowers
fair were flung,

At the feet of her now kneeling at the altar with
her love,
And the aged priest prayed softly for a blessing
from above.

Holy Mother, now descending,
In her heart give love unending,
Joy and peace, forever blending,
By thy grace !

Blessing every fond endeavour
With thine own Almighty favour,
May the light of heaven shine ever
In her face !

When the twilight softly stealing,
When the bells of heaven faint pealing,
Summon her from earthly feeling
Far away,

May our children slowly bear her
To the church, and as they leave her

Cast as we, with love, before her,
Flowerets gay.

Slow the strangers left the portals, musing deep
upon the scene,
Oft upon that bridal thought they, in their travels
far, I ween.

II

Hushed was all the great cathedral as two trav-
ellers pacéd slow
To the altar draped in mourning, where but one
short year ago

In the blushing of the springtime, happy lovers
two were wed;
And the silence that surrounds them is the silence
of the dead.

As they bow in adoration to the sombre altar
there,
Hark! a death chant wafted soft and low now
breaks upon the air.

All life is love and love is life
And life is death and death is life

And love is death and death is love!
Miserere.

The summer flower, the autumn leaf—
In one short hour—how like a breath
Doth fade away like thee, O friend!
Miserere.

At the last hour, O God of love,
O, by Thy power, take us above
To dwell with Thee, who art the Life.
Miserere.

As the strains died into silence, from the old
cathedral's door
Came a mournful throng of maidens, those that
in the days of yore,

Once so happy, sang sweet music for their friend,
and flowers gave,
Then they came to grace her bridal, now to dec-
orate her grave.

On the bier the sweet dead maiden lay with hands
crossed on her breast,
Clasping lilies white, sole partners of her long
unending rest.

Slow the strangers left the portals, while the
death chant rose and fell,
And its strains so weird and mournful seemed to
ring their funeral knell.

AT TWILIGHT

Love, at the hour when nature listeneth
To hear the bells of evening call to prayer,
Alone, I knelt upon the altar stair,
While all about was silence deep as death;
Nor dared I look at Her who comforteth
The stricken heart, and sad. No place was there
For me, in pain, I thought. I did not dare
To pray for my poor self, but as the breath
Of incense floated through the sacred place,
As though some spirit whispered to me, "Pray!"
Upon my bended knees I prayed for thee!
And as I knelt there came to me a grace,
An inward peace and hope, while far away
I heard the organ sounding solemnly.

No longer now I feared to upward gaze
Into Her face, where high the altar stood.
I thought thy spirit near me, and I felt
Purer thereby, as though we two had knelt
And shared together, as in other days,
Communion with the Beautiful and Good.

INTERVALE

O, pleasant town in the hills away !

Asleep in the hills like a bird safe-nested—
O, pleasant walk by the winding way

In the freshening air of the autumn day,

High up to the summits snowy crested—

O, meadows that gleam in the morning sun—

When the grain bends low with the breath of
the air—

O, happy, who looks, when the day is done

Afar where the brooklets gently run,

On Peace and Happiness everywhere.

O, solemn watch of the hills at night,

Where thou liest asleep, O ancient town !

When the mists with a covering soft and light

Wrap farm and orchard and grain-field white,

And the river that skirts the meadows brown—

O, may the eyes that look on thee,

Thine utter rest and thy sure safe-keeping,

Drink in thy peace and happily
Know that some time there is to be
For them a Rest like thy peaceful sleeping!

WANDERING

Not yet! The way is long and far and wild,
And oftentimes high mountains rise between
Me and the land I seek, and like a child
Bewildered, lost and weeping, I would lean
Upon thee for support. Point out the way,
Or stay beside me through the weary day,
And thou may'st leave me when the sun has set—
But go not yet.

Not yet! At times the mists are very near,
And on my face I feel their breath and see
Strange shapes that come and go. Anon I hear
The murmur of wild voices mocking me.
And in the gloom thy hand I clasp and pray—
“Not yet—the night is dark—wait until day!
Wait till the dews upon the fields are wet,
But go not yet.”

Not yet, nor ever take thyself from me!
I cannot go alone. Without thy hand

In mine, my heart would fail so utterly!
Beloved, let us seek that distant land.
Through all the years that in the darkness hide,
Together let us journey side by side—
Leave me when the world's sorrow we forget,
But go not yet.

THE VOICE

Was it the wash of the waves as they beat
Low on the shore in the evening sun?
Was it the rush of the winds as they sped
Far to the west where the day lay dead,
Like the rush and the hurry of bird-wings fleet,
Seeking the south when the summer is done?

The air that rose from the sea was cold
And heavy with moisture from the waves—
I felt its breath and heard the low
Melodious moaning of the flow
Of the waters beneath that were backward rolled
From the hidden depths of the sea nymph's caves.

The sun went down and the twilight fell
And the air grew chill and the pale stars shone;
Yet ever above the voice of the sea
I heard that sound and it seemed to me
At times like the throb of a passing bell,
Telling the years of a life that was gone—

And at times I thought it was the cry
Of him that seeks one gone astray
In the dark—and along the shadowed track
Through wood and plain he calls "Come back!"
But only the night wind hurries by,
Or a gleam of moonlight lights his way.

TO MY MOTHER

ON RECEIPT OF A VALENTINE

Mother, sometimes when I am all alone
My thoughts go back across the bygone years,
That seem for one brief moment to have flown
Away forever, and again I seem
To be a child with thee—again I dream
The dreams of boyhood, all unstained with tears.

I seem to sit for one brief hour with thee
As once I sat, when in the golden west
Faded the day in darkness, silently—
Again I hear thee sing, the dear sweet hymn
The while my heart is bowed, my eyes are dim,
“Ah! Weary Pilgrim! Cease thy mourning!
Rest!”

Ah! those old times are hidden now so deep,
So deep within the shadow far behind—
Alas! we cannot wake them from their sleep!

And thou and I have met Time on the way—
And he has looked on us—ah, well-a-day!
He touched all else! Our hearts he could not find.

So would I thank thee for the token sweet
Of thy dear love for me— Dear, lift thy face
And let me my old boyish vows repeat
Of love and reverence, and let me be
As one has sung: “A child to-night with thee,”
And let me rest in my old resting place.

AN EVENING SONG AT PARTING

When the eventide doth bring,
With its stillness soft and sweet,
Memories round our hearts that cling
Dear and deathless; when we meet
Round the altar of our prayèr,
Saviour, be Thou with us there!

May we know as there we kneel
That however far apart,
Thou, dear Lord, canst gently steal
Into each and every heart:—
Where Thou art the shadows flee,
All is light, and hope, in Thee.

What though wide seas roll between,
Love is wider than the sea;
Many journeys have we been,
Yet we went not far from Thee.
Like an atmosphere Thy love
Pressed about us from above.

So we sing our parting song,
So we breathe our last "good-bye"!
Days are short, but hearts are strong;
 Night comes soon, but morning sky
Follows quickly, and the shore
Waits to greet us evermore.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies the love that God's love granted
Us for a while to keep,
Here lies the flower that God's hand planted
Safe in the earth's heart deep!

Winterward, follow the day's swift hours,
Follow they fast or slow,
Deep out of sight lies the sweetest of flowers,
Winter came long ago.

MISUNDERSTOOD

If in the dark and the gloom to-night,
The gloom without and the gloom within,
Out of the silence soft and light,
With a touch my inmost heart should win,
Into my hand some hand might steal,
With never a word or a whisper low,
But only a pressure that I should feel,
And a swift strong pulsing my soul should
know.

How like a tired child would I
Lie back in my chair and close my eyes
And dreamily, restfully murmur, "Why,
I've waited for thee with tears and sighs!
With tears and sighs for many a year,
Till I dreamed thy day was over-past;
But now thou art come and art with me, dear,
And I feel thy hand in mine at last.

Oh, sweet fruition of bitter years!
Oh, friend, I can see and love and trust,

How short the travelled way appears
For all its toil and heat and dust!
Thou seem'st to have been with me every mile,
With thy hand in mine through each long day,
I wonder I murmured even a while
At the length and the weariness of the way.

Such is the dream I have, and feel
Floating about me, like some old strain
Into my heart that once did steal,
And left me to think it would come again ;
Will it ever come or is it a spell
That lures me on, and only a lure?
Ah, when shall I know and touch as well
The hand that to me shall be strong and sure?

Somehow to-night I am so alone !
Alone and apart from the nearest and near—
It is not that they are less mine own,
Or that (perhaps) I am to them less dear ;
But to-night they are all so far, so far,
And the prayers that I make are soulless and
dead,
And voiceless and cold as the farthest star
Are the words I read and long have read.

Oh, for the soul whose eyes so deep
Should reflect there dearest hopes of mine,
Oh, for the love those thoughts to keep
Sacred, and the aims of my life divine !
For I long to do and be, not seem,
And ever I long for that withheld hand
To clasp, and the words as the words of the dream
I know and I trust and I understand.

SUMMER AND WINTER

I

Sweet and pure the amber light,
On thy window casement lying,
Mingles with the rose leaves white
In the scented night winds sighing—
And I sing as thou doth sleep,
Songs of drowsy cadences,
Of low brooks where gray willows weep
And birds call through the dreamy trees—
Sleep! Sleep!
Soft as rain and sweet and free
May the night winds be to thee,
In their dark arms holding thee,
To their great hearts folding thee.
Sleep! Sleep!

II

Still asleep! The night is deeper
Yet than all nights that have past,
Never yet has any sleeper
Waked to say 'tis gone at last.

Once I sang as thou didst sleep,
 'Twas long ago—so long ago—
Oh ; a weary watch I keep
 When thou liest low.
Sleep ! Sleep !
 Thou wilt not awake at morn
To hear the scythes sing in the corn !
 The violets bloom but not for thee,
 Immortelles and rose-mary.
Sleep ! Sleep !

A MEMORY

Hushed is the noise of day:
About the elms, that bending low
To catch the whisp'lings of the night,
 The breezes blow
 And seem to say,
“The care of day hath taken flight.”

The grim old castle walls
Of dark Montlery's massive pile,
Stand stark and grim athwart the sky—
 Save when a smile
 Upon them falls
As shafts of moonlight on them lie.

Now peal the midnight bells,
O'er sleeping town and meadows dark,
Where in the grass the goblins lie,
 And start and hark,
 As through the dells,
The midnight echoes faintly sigh.

NIGHT

When restful comes the night and heated day
Has passed with all its heartaches from our sight,
And round the town, that nods in slumbers light,
The fairy progeny of darkness play;

Then slowly as the gloom comes on apace
The messengers of light from yon pale moon
In splendor haste their mission blest, and soon
All nature glows and brightens at the grace

And beauty of the mistress of the night,
Then glancing moonbeams shining through the
trees,
And branches bending to the sighing breeze,
Show forth the tender leaves in colors bright.

Where dreary shadows lie athwart the lawn,
And ghostly forms to stalk in silence seem,
There too full sudden shines the silvery beam,
And in a twinkling fly the shadows, gone

To hide beneath the dark old church's walls,
Or crouch behind the tombs and sullen lurk,
Or where by marshes rank and grassy birk,
The owl in harsh discordant notes loud calls—

The chapel tower is tipped with silver bars
That glancing play about the vane that stands
And frolics with the winds that come from lands
That distant seem as yon bright, distant stars.

Then songs of love and beauty rise and cease,
And rise again—then tremble soft away
As shadowy night before the dawn of day—
And silence broods o'er all, and all is peace.

THE OLD BELL AT CHERTSEY*

I stood on Chertsey's bridge as died the day,
And dying, left its heritage to eve;
O'er all the land the sun's soft radiance lay,
And as it set the day had ceased to live,

And underneath the bridge with many a turn,
Among the meadows clad with summer's green,
By banks all overhung with tangled fern,
The gently sloping hills, grain-clad, between,

The Thames flowed on as softly and as sure
As when in ages past the Roman horde
First set their feet upon old Britain's shore,
And, conquering, roughly trod the grassy sward.

But not of Caesar thought I, as I gazed,
Nor yet of Runnymede before me spread,
Nor yet of Henry, who his life work o'er,
Lies in the church, himself and memory dead.

* Vide the "Curfew Bell" and old legends.

For as I gazed upon the silent town,
From out that ivied tower there rang the bell
That told that one more day of life was gone,
The number of departed days to swell.

But more it told—how from that belfry's height
A maiden, urged by love divine, did swing
To save her lover's life—and for this deed
Eternal ages do her praises sing.

“Alas!” I thought, “where now can love be found
So great as that which nerved that maiden's
hand?”

The old bell pealed a loud reproachful sound,
That echoed far and near throughout the land.

“Where?” said its echo—“Youth, go to thy home!
Read in thy mother's heart what love has
brought—

A life of sacrifice—with acts more brave
Than that which in the ages past was wrought

“By that frail maiden clinging to my side
As out there rang the curfew's mournful wail—
For love more noble actions strives to hide
Than ever poet told or olden tale.”

NIGHT AND MORNING

I

I looked across the ocean lying
Asleep as the sad night fell,—
And afar on the waters, moaning, crying,
I heard the lighthouse bell;
And ever its mournful cadence dying
Of pale death seemed to tell.

II

I looked across the waters glowing,
As the bright dawn blushed o'er the sea;
And ever the joyous winds were blowing,
The bell's tone far and free—
And I thought as I heard its cadence flowing,
It sang of life to me.

AT THE FIREPLACE

Wilt thou not come? The winds are keen
And cold without. In my demesne,
Ah! all is warmth and brightness. See
How in the hearth-stone merrily
Dancing, quaint goblins are seen!

Sit here—or by yon mantel lean
And watch the flickering golden sheen
Fall on the antique tapestry—
Wilt thou not come?

Ah, do not wait! The time has been
When nothing could have come between
Our hearts—and now? Ah, mournfully
The wind is calling—see they flee
The goblin crew, led by their queen.
Wilt thou not come?

TRIOLETS

DISTRUST

I know you'll forget
When the summer goes by!
Would we had not met!
I know you'll forget,
I cannot tell why!
I love you—and yet
I know you'll forget
When the summer goes by.

TRUST

Yet thine eyes are so true
They could never deceive!
In their clear depths of blue,
Thine eyes are so true,
I see written "Believe!"
Why then should I grieve?
For thine eyes are so true
They could never deceive!

A DREAM

"Wisely improve the Present—it is Thine."
—LONGFELLOW'S "HYPERION."

Three forms there passed before me in a dream,
Three spirits—each his own way did pursue.
The first and last quick did recede from view,
The second paused—and thus to speak did seem:

"Oh, youth, those spirits that so quickly fly,
The Past and Future are—for neither grieve—
The Future will but certainly deceive,
The Past will only bring to you a sigh.

"Behold in me the truest of the three!
I am the Present! and thy staunchest friend,
E'er at thy side, I'll guard thee to the end
If only thou wilt put thy trust in me."

Long time I paused, and then at last I said,
"Oh, Spirit of the Present, be it so!"

"From out my heart let Past and Future go."
Then sudden I awoke—the dream had fled.

So with the Present always do I live,
Nor gaze upon the Past with longing sight,
Nor strive to pierce the Future's blackened night,
Resolved to do what may the Present give.

FAREWELL

I do not say, remember!—
For that were a boon too great
To ask of thee, upon whose smile
The hopes of many wait—

Ah, no! thou canst not love
One such as I, and yet—
Though I do not beg thee remember,
I do not say—forget!

SLEIGHING SONG

What ho! the winds are crying,
"Come away!"

Haste while the pale moon's light is falling o'er
us,

Haste while the night air trembles with our
chorus,

Away, away,

Across the frozen plains and meadows flying,
Come away.

What ho; sweet voices call us,
Come away,

Haste while warm lips are silent 'neath our
glances,

Haste while a dream of love the hour entrances,
Away, away,

Into the night—who cares what may befall us?
Come away.

What ho! the stars are paling—
 Come away,
Haste while bright eyes look love (to thine re-
 plying),
What care we then, if all the stars be dying !
 Away, away,
At freezing hearts, not freezing nights, be railing !
 Come away.

A SONG

The fragrance of the summer rose—
 Oh, when most sweet?
What time Zephyrus softly blows
 Across the wheat;
Or woos the blossoms and the flowers
 In summer hours?

Ah, no! far sweeter, through the snow
 Or blinding rain,
Or when the winds of winter blow,
 It comes again—
The perfume of the roseleaf, faint,
 As lover's plaint.

And now that I have lost thee, sweet,
 Nor see thee near—
Nor yet those songs of thine I greet
 With loving ear;
How dear to me thou art! and yet
 I must forget!

IN THE GLOAMING

A subtle sense of sadness steals
Upon the evening air, and low
The gentle rhythmic underflow
Of melody sweeps on, and seals
The lips in silence, while the eyes
Are filled with tears, the air with sighs :

And sad, the face of her that plays,
As though she longed for by-gone days.

A RONDEAU

O summer wind that faint doth blow
Over the green fields, soft and low,
Lift, lift the tresses from her face
And show to me that winsome grace
That she would wish I did not know!

With love of all the dearest foe
Go from my heart to her heart go
And beg for my poor heart a place,
O summer wind,

In her affections. Should she show
To her true love one sweet glance, though
She ne'er did lift again the lace
To show the treasures of her face
I yet would forth full happy go,
O summer wind!

GUARDED

Thou canst not read my meaning? Can it be
My eyes reflect not what their master's heart,
So full of love, would tell to only thee,
And play the traitor's part?

Ah, well! perchance they showed their wisdom
too—
Why should I ask what I must be denied?
And so my eyes, for my sake, looked at you,
And seeming happy, lied!

Other Verses

A VICAR'S GARDEN

One morning to my friends I said,
"I too shall have a garden bed,
And flowers pink and flowers blue
Shall bloom for me, dear friends, and you."

My friends they laughed and said, "Not so;
No flowers for thee shall ever grow.
Tread thou thy streets; let others sing
Their songs as they go gardening!"

So mocked my friends; yet here I stand
Beside my little garden land,
And proudly sing my happy lay
Because a pink rose blooms to-day!

Lady! you never jeered at me,
Nor mocked my cockney husbandry,
And when for flowers the weeds I tilled
Your eyes with no deep laughter filled.

Between ourselves, I do not know
However came my rose to grow!

But bloom it does in this sweet air,
The glory of my garden fair!

So in pure gratitude I lay
My rose within thy hand to-day,
And walk these streets with happy tread,
Rejoicing in my garden bed.

EASTERN WAY

Between the islands flowing
 The salt tides follow fast,
They follow fast as knowing
 They reach the sea at last!

Their rising and their falling
 No earthly power can stay,
A voice to them is calling
 Along the Eastern Way.

My little boat is rocking
 Moored safely near the strand,
The tides cry, yearning, mocking,
 It will not understand.

But some day it will listen,
 And bear me far away,
To where the sea waves glisten
 Beyond the Eastern Way!

SOUGHT AND FOUND

I wandered through the ancient ways
Where once her feet had pressed,
The breath of ne'er forgotten days
Filled all my soul with rest.

Here surely, said I, I shall find
That dear remembered place,
And where the little sea paths wind,
Shall look upon her face.

Yet as I gazed I could not see
That form of all most fair,
What longer journey could there be
Than that which brought me there?

I closed my eyes in sorrow deep
And by my side she stood
As though that eager tryst to keep,
And then I understood.

No need henceforth long seas to glide
Or pierce a bygone day,
The one I sought walks by my side,
Her love illumes my way.

EAGLE PARK

How hard to change for rest as this so deep
The roaring city's tireless toil and din.
Here life is individual, natural, sweet!—
There lost amid the rush of hurrying feet!
Happy the soul who here or there may keep
Pure Nature's peace and quietude within.

TO W. B. D.

To-day your heart's door opens wide
To those who have a right to win
An entrance to its warmth inside,
Please let my little verses in !

From over seas the greetings fly
On wireless currents through the blue.
Is it too much to heed my cry?
Please let my little verses through.

From North and South, from West and East
Glad messages your threshold throng,
They hail you on your natal Feast,
My verses sing the self-same song.

Please listen to their tiny strain,
Accept the tribute which they bring,
Then send them on their way again,
Happy because you heard them sing.

TO MY MOTHER

Mother, this story of a little child
I give thee at this holy Christmas-tide.
Holy—since in a long past winter wild
Another Babe its sweet eyes opened wide—
It was indeed a solemn peaceful night
Whereon the holy Star of Bethlehem shone
bright.

And thou to whom that Sweet Babe is most dear
Hast seemed through all the past most pure to
keep
Thy childlike heart so fresh and true and clear,
As though the white years were a dreamful
sleep—
That soon is gone and thou a child again
As He that saw the Star upon Judea's plain.

Ah, Mother dear, this be thy Christmas Tree,
To feel thy children's love around thee cling—
Theirs that in England over the wide sea—
Ours that to thy feet sweet love gifts bring—
Ah me—when shall we all as oft before
Gather around thee, Mother dear, once more?

TO PHYLLIS

To-day your little Christmas bird
(Set free beneath the Italian blue)
Brought safe to me your festal word.
Across the wintry seas she flew ;
Nor winter's storms had power to stay
Your birdling on her western way.

I stroked her wings and held her fast,
And praised her for her journey done.
And when the hour of rest was passed
I set her free beneath the sun.
Go, little bird, I said, and win
That tender heart to take thee in !

Straight up she flew and out to sea ;
And now I fancy her anear
The home where all her soul would be,
Your home and hers she holds most dear—
Italy's land, so far away,
Yet close to me this Christmas Day !

THE CHRISTMAS SHOP GIRL

Centre of all the impatient throng
That crowds the counter where she stands.
What care they if her hours be long?
Hers but to answer their demands.
All day about her fall and rise
Importunate voices sharp and shrill.
What reck they of her tired eyes?
She only lives to do their will!

Yet once the Eastern stars grew bright,
And from the glory fell to earth
A song that rang upon the night
Acclaiming that most holy birth.
No other Christmas gift they sought
Who found the stable in the snow,
Only their faithful hearts they brought
To Bethlehem's manger long ago.

Gone is that early Christmas day,
And in its stead with rush and roar
A crowd that will not brook delay
Swirls like a torrent more and more.
Still is it true, for those who seek,
The way to Bethlehem may be found ;
For souls, 'mid turmoil, patient, meek,
For them the Christmas notes resound.

O tired of all the season's noise,
Strident and selfish ; you who stand
Surrounded with a thousand toys,
Piled foolishly on either hand ;
God keep within your heart the strain
Forever old, forever new,
For you the angels sing again,
The gift of gifts is born for you.

THE HAVEN

What visions fill the traveller's eye
As speeds the good ship out to sea;
The mountainous billows fall and rise,
The horizon's ceaseless mystery
Beckons him on; and all the while
The white wake lengthens mile by mile.

All these he sees; but clearer far
Another vision evermore
He watches where his dear ones are,
The white wake lengthens to their door.
To what far port his ship may fare
This is the haven of his prayer.





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